is concerned. In the year 1992, we had considered the issues of environment and human development and the follow-up action has been taken in the WSSD at Johannesburg. Sir, the question pertains to ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not disturb.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, as far as WSSD is concerned, as to what concept/activity has taken place at Johannesburg, it is a continuing process from 1972 to 1992 and 2002. It is a continuing process. As far as the incremental advantage of the action which we have taken is concerned, actually, Sir, the WSSD has considered that sanitation is one of the main components which has to be include in the ongoing multilateral discussions. And we have also mentioned some targets in the WSSD for poverty eradication, like reducing the number of people who are living in extreme poverty, whose income is below one dollar, by half by the year 2015, achieving universal primary education by 2015, reduction of infant mortality rate by 2015 ...*(Interruptions).*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not disturb.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: These are the incremental achievements which have taken place in WSSD. And it also targets reduction of maternal mortality rate by three quarters by 2015, reduction of HIV and AIDS cases and prevention in most affected countries by 25 per cent, arresting further loss of biodiversity and so on.

Ecological havoc in Aravalli Hills

*443. SHRI KARNENDU BH ATTACH AR J EE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be please to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsreport captioned, 'Ecological havoc in Aravalli Hills', published in tHe Time of India, dated the 1st November, 2002;

(b) whether Government have drawn up any plan to stem the rapid exploitation of the Aravalli Hills, to meet the growing urban requirements; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) The Government has enacted the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to take effective, measures for protection of environment and prevention of ecological degradation in the country.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has brought out a notification *vide* S.0.319(E) dated 07.05.1992 under section 3(1) and section 3(2) (v) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 prohibiting certain activities in specified areas of Aravalli Range in Gurgaon district of Haryana and Alwar district of Rajasthan except with the prior permission of the Ministry. The activities covered under the notification are (i) location of any new industry including expansion and modernatisation, (ii) all new mining operations including renewal of mining leases, (iii) existing mining leases in Sanctuaries/National Parks and areas covered under Project Tiger and/ or mining being done without the permission of the competent authority, (iv) cutting of trees, (v) construction of any clusters of dwelling units, farm houses, sheds, community centres, information centres and any activity connected with such construction (including roads, a part of infrastructure relating thereto) and (vi) electrification (laying of new transmission lines).

The powers of the Central Government under the Aravalli Notification, 1992 were subsequently delegated to the State Governments of Haryana and Rajasthan *vide* Notification S.0.1189 (E) dated 29.11.1999. *Inter-alia,* the State Governments of Haryana and Rajasthan have been required to draw up master plans for development of the area covered by the Aravalli Notification, 1992 integrating environmental concerns and keeping in view the future land use of the area.

The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has notified Gurgaon town and adjoining industrial areas of Gurgaon district, Haryana for regulation of ground water development and management on account of depletion of ground water due to over-exploitation and deterioration in ground water quality.

Considering the ecological importance of the ridge, which forms a part

of the Aravalli range, the Government of Delhi has also constituted Delhi Ridge Management Board on 06.10.1995 to maintain and protect the ridge area effectively.

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Sir, the Aravalli Range has been an ecologically sensitive area and needs to be protected. The Supreme Court on 6.5.2002 directed that all mining activities and pumping of ground water within a radius of five kilometres of Delhi-Haryana border be stopped. But, I want to know as to why this ban is being flouted.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, extensive construction was going on in and around the area of Gurgaon and in the Aravalli Hills mining activities were being carried on the procure stones as well as silica sands. Sir, in 1992, the Government has taken a conscious decision and issued the Aravalli notification. Because of the Aravalli notification, we found a way to regulate the activities of construction, industrial, electrification and mining and so on to a great extent. That led to the 1999 Notification giving an opportunity to the States to make impact assessments on their own. The Government of India has delegated these powers to the States. These two States, Rajasthan and Haryana, have taken their decisions, and, while taking their decisions, they have issued a lot of licences for mining. But the entrepreneurs are not satisfied with the environment regulations. That has resulted in some PILs and Writ Petitions to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has directed the Bhure Lai Committee as well as this Committee and so on. They have inspected the sites and reported the matter to the Supreme Court. Because of the Supreme Court's orders, the mining activitiy has been stopped. Last week, on the 16th, these sites in Rajasthan were cleared. Wherever there is regular mining, so long as it does not affect the environment, we are agreeable; there is no problem.

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: My second supplementary is this. The Bhure Lai Committee was also directed by the Supreme Court to visit the sites and submit a report. It is learnt to have suggested that the Union Government should declare the area of Aravalli Hills in Gurgaon as an 'ecologically sensitive area'. Has that been done? If not, what are the reasons?

SHRI T. R. BALLU: Although, it has not been declared 'ecologically sensitive', it is actually ecologically sensitive because of the degradation

being inflicted on it. Anyhow, we will take not of this. But we have not yet notified it.

श्री ललितभाई मेहता: सभापति जी, मैं मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि जो इंडियन फॉरेस्ट ऐक्ट है, फॉरेस्ट कंजर्वेशन ऐक्ट है, इंडियन एंर्वोयरनमेंट ऐक्ट है उसमें प्रावधान ऐसे हैं जिसके कारण विकास की प्रक्रियाएं विभिन्न राज्यों में स्थगित हो गई हैं और विभिन्न राज्यों ने इन सभी कानूनों में संशोधन करने के लिए, पूरा रिव्यू करने के लिए मांग की है। तो उसको ध्यान में रखते हुए मंत्री जी, क्या इन कानूनों को फिर से सोचने की दिशा में कुछ कदम उठा रहे हैं या ?

SHRI T. R. BALLU: As of now, there is no such proposal. There is nothing on the Government's agenda to reconsider it.

SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR: Sir, the Aravalli Hills extend not only up to Haryana, but its remnants extend up to large portion of Delhi. For example, the Ridge is a part of the Aravalli. Now, we find that the Ridge in Delhi has been encroached upon by the Defence Ministry; they have put up their quarters there; not only that, one hotel has also come up there. I agree that the matter went up to the Supreme Court; but an exception was made. Why doesn't the Minister issue a notification ?n what constitutes the Ridge?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, specific measures have been taken to protect the Delhi Ridge. A total of 7777 hectares of the Ridge have been declared as 'reserved forest' on 24.5.1994. An area of 4707 acres of Asola and 2167 acres of Bhati Mines, which is a part of the southern Ridge, has been notified as sanctuary, an Eco Task Force was constituted for restoration of 2001 acres of the Bhati Mines area, which is a part of the Asola-Bhati sanctuary in the southern Ridge. A work-plan for five years commenced in 2001 -02. Plantation and soil conservation measures have been taken up by the Forest Department. Twenty check-dams have been constructed.The Forest Department has also planted two lakh seedlings to improve the ecology of the area.

Uniform staffing pattern in Central Universities

*444. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the UGC has set up a Committee to consider